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IEMA Encourages People to Prepare for Earthquakes

SPRINGFIELD, IL – Last week, residents of southern California experienced a 7.0 magnitude earthquake. To this day, residents continue to experience significantly powerful aftershocks. The event served as a stark reminder that earthquakes can happen anywhere in the world and at any time of day. In fact, records indicate Illinois and several other states in the central United States were rocked by some of the largest earthquakes ever measured in North American history.

Illinois is flanked on its western and eastern borders by two active seismic zones: the New Madrid Seismic Zone and the Wabash Valley Seismic Zone. An earthquake similar to what was recently experienced in California could have devastating effects on our state. “Creating an environment of education, awareness and preparedness will save lives in Illinois,” said Alicia Tate-Nadeau, Acting Director of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency. “While we cannot predict when the next major quake will occur, we can help people learn how to protect themselves and reduce damage to their homes.”

Learning how to “Drop, Cover and Hold On” can help people prevent injury during an earthquake. The phrase reminds people to drop down to the floor, take cover under a sturdy desk, table or other furniture, and hold on to that object and be prepared to move with it until the shaking ends. Most casualties result from falling objects and debris caused by the earth shaking.

There are several steps people can take to help prevent injuries and property damage at home, including:

- Strapping water heaters and large appliances to wall studs
- Anchoring overhead light fixtures
- Fastening shelves to wall studs and securing cabinet doors with latches
- Strapping TVs, computers and other heavy equipment to prevent tipping
- Learning how to shut off gas, water and electricity in case the lines are damaged

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Each year the Illinois Emergency Management Agency leads an initiative to register homes, businesses, schools and organizations in the world's largest earthquake drill. This year's earthquake drill will take place on Thursday, October 17 at 10:17 a.m. It's never too early to register your participation in this potentially life-saving event. Register today at www.shakeout.org.

Learn more about how you can prepare your home, business and family for an earthquake at www.Ready.Illinois.gov. There, you will find preparedness and mitigation tutorial videos that will walk residents and business owners through the process of preparing your home, family and community for this natural disaster. Earthquake safety tips will also be posted throughout February on the Ready Illinois Facebook (www.facebook.com/ReadyIllinois) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/ReadyIllinois) pages.



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